

LESSON 2

WAR IN THE EARLY MODERN ERA (1648-1789)

One consequence of European warfare from the Renaissance to World War II was an increase in the size and power of central governments.... The machinery of the modern state is derived historically from the organizational demands of warfare, and states as we know them today trace their origins and development in large measures to the crucible of past wars. In the classic formulation of Charles Tilly, "War made the state, and the state made war."

-- Bruce D. Porter

War and the Rise of the State (1994)

Introduction

Purpose	<p>This lesson will help you understand the</p> <p>Shift in the character of Western warfare</p> <p>Role of war in the rise of the state</p>
Why Study War in the Early Modern Era?	<p>This period</p> <p>Had a profound effect on later events, especially the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era</p> <p>Is important to Marine Corps officers due to the effect it had on the development of Western warfare</p>
Relationship to Other Instruction	<p>This lesson introduces concepts that will be discussed in later lessons, such as limited and unlimited war (lesson 4) and the relationship between the state and its Armed Forces (lesson 3).</p>

Study Time	This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require about 3 hours of study.
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Educational Objectives

Major Shift in Character	Understand the major shift in the character of Western warfare that occurred in the late 17th century. [JPME Areas 3b, 3d, and 5a]
Balance of Power	Understand The concept of the "balance of power" The balance of power's significance for the state system [JPME Area 3d]
Role of War in Forming Modern States	Examine the role of war in the evolution of the modern state system. [JPME Areas 3d, and 3e]
Influencing Factors	Assess the social, political, economic, and cultural forces that influenced the establishment and composition of standing professional armies in early modern nation states such as Prussia and France. [JPME Area 3d]
Age of Limited Warfare	Explain why the 18th century has been called the age of limited warfare and identify the factors and considerations that caused it to be interpreted as such. [JPME Area 3d]
Frederick's Military Forces	Describe how military forces were employed and supported during the 18th century, as represented by Prussia. [JPME Area 3d]
JPME Areas/ Objectives/Hour s (accounting data)	3/b/0.5 3/d/1.0 3/e/0.25 5/a/0.25

Historical Background

Military
Revolution:
17th Century

The evolution of warfare in the early modern era--that is, from the end of the Thirty Years' War (1648) to the outbreak of the French Revolution (1789)--underwent drastic and fundamental changes. In fact, the 17th century underwent what Professor Michael Roberts, in his classic and influential "Military Revolution" inaugural lecture in 1956, has termed a *military revolution* that affected four areas:

Tactics (from individuals to trained and disciplined units)

Strategy (with larger military forces, more ambitious policies could be pursued, including seeking a decisive battle)

Scale of war (scale of war increased in Europe)

Impact of war (impact of war on society increased)

All these changes in military affairs tended to reinforce the power of central, dynastic governments and helped give rise to modern nation-states in Europe. The following example of France will serve to illustrate this point.

The Case of
France

Dr. John Lynn of the University of Illinois has analyzed this for France and noted the following during the early modern period:

In the second half of the 15th century, the King of France (Francis I) could muster a theoretical peacetime army of 14,000 men and one of approximately 45,000 for war.

In the late 17th century (1678-88), Louis XIV's peacetime army of 165,000 would rise to a peak strength of 420,000 men for the War of the League of Augsburg (1688-97).

By the end of the 17th century, the King of France was primarily recruiting men from within his own realm, and Louis XIV's "government equipped the common soldier, fed him, and paid him while he learned and practiced his profession." (John Lynn, "Recalculating French Army Growth during the *Grand Siecle*, 1610-1715," *French Historical Studies*, Fall 1994, pp. 881-906.) (The quotation is on page 905.)

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Historical Background, Continued

The Character of Warfare in Early Modern Europe	In Europe, the character of war changed during this period. The Seven Years War (1756-1763) was very different from the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) of the early 17th century. Despite the increase in both the size and effectiveness of armies during this era, the period after the end of the Thirty Years War was characterized by LIMITED warfare with LIMITED objectives. The introduction of this type of warfare was brought about by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which ended the Thirty Years War. This treaty established a " balance of power " relationship between Europe's dynastic states; one that would be maintained until the French Revolution.
Frederick the Great	Further developments in the evolution of warfare owe much to the 18th century King of Prussia, Frederick the Great. Frederick synthesized technological developments, tactical innovations, and his own personal experiences of war into a military system that allowed his infant state of Prussia to hold its many enemies at bay. Under his rule, Prussia expanded its borders and repelled invasions of stronger European powers--primarily France, Russia, and Austria--for a period of 25 years, resulting in King Frederick and his Prussian armies becoming the epitome of martial effectiveness until the time of Napoleon.
Frederick's Tactical Contributions	Frederick's fame did not result from any original discovery in the art of war, although his use of the oblique order and his invention of horse artillery were startling innovations in his day. His success in combining the best in 18th century strategic, tactical, and technological advancements and his astute generalship ensured his inclusion as one of the great captains of history.
Writings on Military Art	Frederick's lasting contribution to the evolution of warfare in the modern era was his effort to assimilate and, through his prolific writing on military art, to disseminate the lessons learned in his campaigns and in his lifelong study of military history. Using several published treatises on war, instructions to his princes and his generals, and new regulations and manuals to his army, Frederick brought a pragmatic and experienced point of view to the study of war. His writings retain their relevance despite the passage of time.

Required Readings

On War

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, pp. 587 (para. 3) to 594 (top), of Chapter 3, Book 8. While you read this chapter about the ideas of Clausewitz, be aware that during this period almost every state had evolved into an absolute monarchy; the privileges and influence of the estates had gradually disappeared.

Makers of Modern Strategy

Palmer, R. R. "Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bulow: From Dynastic to National War," *Makers of Modern Strategy From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, edited by Peter Paret. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 91 to 119. Palmer first contrasts two styles of warfare, a pre-French Revolution type of limited warfare and a post-Revolution style, which has marked most conflicts ever since. This transition period from "pre-to-post" is reflected in the three men that Palmer discusses. This chapter includes an excellent summary of the book's two preceding chapters that address both Machiavelli and the military revolution of the 17th century.

Rothenberg, Gunther. "Maurice of Nassau, Gustavus Adolphus, Raimondo Montecuccoli, and the 'Military Revolution' of the Seventeenth Century," *Makers of Modern Strategy From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, edited by Peter Paret. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 32 to 37 (top). In this reading you will learn how Maurice of Nassau approached building and disciplining his forces. Then, see how Gustavus Adolphus adopted and modified the Dutch model to implement his grand stratagem in central Germany.

European Armies and the Conduct of War

Strachan, Hew. "The Age of Marlborough and Frederick," *European Armies and the Conduct of War*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1983, pp. 8 to 22.

(Note: Reading total includes three full page maps.) In this reading you will learn how Marlborough and Frederick used similar strategies in the Battle of Ramillies (1706) and the Battle of Leuthen (1757). Remember the formations and approaches used with the cavalry and infantry.

For Further Study

Supplemental Readings

The readings listed are **not** required. They are provided as recommended sources of additional information about topics in this lesson that may interest you. They will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

Reed, Browning. *The War of the Austrian Succession*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1955.

Lynn, John A. *Giant of the Grand Siecle: The French Army, 1610-1715*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Parker, Geoffrey. "The 'Military Revolution', 1560-1660 ---- A Myth?" *Journal of Modern History*. Volume 48, Number 2 (June 1976), pp. 2-19.

Rogers, Clifford J. *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Modern Europe*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.

Showalter, Dennis E. *The Wars of Frederick the Great*. New York: Longman, 1996.

Issues for Consideration

Constraints	What were the constraints on land warfare as an instrument of national policy in the 17th and 18th centuries? How did the rulers in Europe balance the effect of economic constraints with their ability to wage war?
Social, Political and Cultural Forces	What were the social, political, and cultural forces prevalent in dynastic monarchies that influenced the development of standing professional armies in European states during the early modern era?
Centralized States	In regard to the revolution of the 17th century, what is the role of warfare and organized armies on the development of the modern state system.
17th Century Military Revolution	What were the four major changes that were brought about by the "military revolution" of the 17th century? What was the impact of each of these changes, both on the conduct of warfare and on the development of European nation states and their central governments?
Composition of Armies	What was the composition of an 18th-century army such as Frederick's? Why was such a composition favored or necessary? Of what kind of people or what population groups was it composed?
Impact of Technology	What was the effect on mobility, maneuver, and tactical objectives that technology and the composition of the 18th-century army caused?
Reasons for Limited Warfare	Why is the 18th century called the "age of limited warfare"? What type and scope of political and military objectives did the dynastic monarchies of this period normally pursue? What considerations influenced the scope of these objectives?

Issues for Consideration, Continued

Employment of Frederick's Armies	How were the military forces of Frederick the Great employed?
	How was the idea of the division of one's forces viewed during this period?
	How were forces generally move?
	Were they concentrated on a single avenue or route?
	Were they dispersed on a wide frontage along parallel routes?
	How were these forces generally employed on the battlefield?
	Were armies divided or concentrated en masse?
	What formations were used?
	Were the various combat arms--infantry, cavalry, artillery--arrayed and employed in combined arms units or were they employed separately?
Support of Frederick's Military Forces	Were exploitation and pursuit applied aggressively?
	How were military forces supported during Frederick's time?
	How important were magazines to the logistical support of military forces?
	What effect did the availability (or lack) of well stocked magazines have on the reliability of military forces of this period?
	How was the army supported when on the move?
	Did the composition of the army limit its use of requisitioning/foraging activities?
	What effect did the reliance on magazines for logistical support have on the range of offensive military operations?